

**Meeting date:** 29 November 2018  
**Report to:** Transport and Highways Cabinet



**Subject/report title:** **Traffic Management Strategy Update**

**Report from:** Head of Highway Services

**Report author/lead contact officer:** Paul Tovey / David Keane

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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege

**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To review how the Council should discharge its statutory duties required by the Traffic Management Act 2004, and agree how best to develop the Traffic Management Strategy for Solihull.

**2. Decision(s) recommended**

2.1 Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note the contents of the report, and agree to develop an updated Traffic Management Strategy on a page for Solihull, in consultation with stakeholders
- (b) Note the need to work collaboratively with Transport for West Midlands to bring forward projects such as Metro, SPRINT and improved park and ride facilities at Railway Stations in Solihull.
- (c) Agree to officers supporting the project management and planning that will be necessary to ensure events such as the Birmingham Velo 100 mile charity bike ride in 2019, and the Commonwealth Games in 2022 are successful, and
- (d) Agree to receive a further report in June 2019, to agree the final strategy.

### **3. What is the issue?**

- 3.1 How to take forward the Council's Traffic Management Strategy? The current strategy covered a 5 year period, ending December 2018. Whilst much of this document remains relevant to the Council's current priorities and service pressures, the question under consideration here is how should this important document evolve.
- 3.2 So why have a strategy? It is a requirement of The Traffic Management Act (The Act) 2004 and Part 2, paragraph 16 places a key duty (the Network Management Duty) on the Council as the local traffic authority, to manage the road network in Solihull with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable and having regard to any other obligations, policies and objectives, the need to:
- (a) secure the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and
  - (b) facilitate the expeditious movement of traffic on adjacent road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.
- 3.3 In essence, this duty requires the Council to have a Traffic Management Strategy and to work collaboratively with colleagues at the West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport for West Midlands and Highways England, together with our neighbouring local traffic authorities in Birmingham, Coventry, Warwickshire, and also along the border with Herefordshire & Worcestershire.
- 3.4 Looking forward over the next 5 to 10 years, it is expected that traffic management both locally and regionally will become even more important if the challenges associated with forecasted economic and housing growth are to be well managed. Add to this, the arrival of HS2 in 2026 and special events, such as the Birmingham Velo 100 mile cycle ride next year and the Commonwealth Games in 2022, then there will be added pressures on the Council and its partners to perform well at both a national and international level.
- 3.5 Making best use of our road network is also important as it underpins many of our economic, environmental, safety and social policies. On the surface, our roads and streets enable the movement of people and goods. Under the surface the road network is a conduit for communication and public utility apparatus that supports our modern society.
- 3.6 The Council, as the Local Traffic Authority, plays an important role in managing the road network to ensure that everyone can undertake their activities safely and efficiently. The term "Traffic" in this context includes the movement of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, as well as all types of motorised forms of transport. The document will also compliment the Cycling and Walking strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) currently being developed.
- 3.7 Together with our partners at West Midlands Police and our many stakeholders it is considered important to have a clear strategy in place.

#### 4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 Whilst the current strategy was extremely useful initially in pulling together the partners and stakeholders to understand what the priorities are, identify areas for improvement and provide clear priorities for service delivery, it certainly is not a document that is used on a daily basis.
- 4.2 Production of the current strategy document was estimated to cost in the region of £30,000, which included data collection and engaging specialist consultant's support. The first option under consideration is therefore to repeat the 2013 exercise and produce another similar comprehensive, data rich, public facing document covering the next 5 to 10 year period, as shown in Appendix A.
- 4.3 The second option under consideration is to produce a much shorter updated version of the strategy, picking up the key changes to the highway network, including the Key Route Network, and the roles of our new partners at the West Midlands Combined Authority and Highways England. Effectively producing an addendum to the current strategy.
- 4.4 The third and final option under consideration is bringing the document in line with the Council's Plan on a page. In today's busy world, people rarely have the time to read and digest lengthy complex strategy documents and the A3 single page format has worked well in other areas and provides greater accessibility, better value for money and potentially more use on a regular basis.
- 4.5 With all 3 options it would be necessary to include an updated Action Plan which could include resources, work programmes, major projects and event planning.
- 4.6 Whilst there has been a number of related traffic management service improvements and changes during the life of the current strategy; the next 5 to 10 years will see an unprecedented amount of change which will need to be given priority and require resources. There is also a move from local interventions to more strategic externally funded initiative driven at a regional level. Hence the need to develop a solution that can be reviewed annually to ensure the right services are provided.
- 4.7 The West Midlands Combined Authority has also recognised the need to improve and invest in measures to help manage traffic and connectivity to public transport across the West Midlands Region. Recently they produced a Congestion Management Plan (See Appendix B) for the region which sets out their plans, many of which will benefit the highway network in Solihull.
- 4.8 Typical examples of the challenges and opportunities likely to affect the Council's Traffic Management service in the near future include:
- **Highway Work Permit Scheme** – Introduced in October, this statutory service enables greater control of when and how road and street works will be delivered. The impact and benefits from the scheme will be monitored over the next 3 years and could lead to the introduction of "Lane Rental" schemes in the future to help manage the impact of some of the major projects.

- **Regional Transport Control Centre (RTCC)** – Currently under development by the West Midlands Combined Authority, the RTCC will bring forward and command and control facility that will improve communication between partners to manage incidents on the regions network, improve special event planning and implementation and provide resilience for our own Urban Traffic Control centre.
- **Major Sporting Events** – The Birmingham Velo Charity cycle ride (May 2019) and the Commonwealth Games (July 2022) are coming to Solihull. The Velo
- **SPRINT** – Transport for West Midlands new high quality and capacity public transport system is planned to be provided along the A45 Coventry Road, B425 Lode Lane corridors and along the A34 Stratford Road, B4102 Marshall Lake Road / Blossomfield Road corridors. Connecting Solihull Town Centre to Birmingham City Centre and the Airport / NEC / HS2 station.
- **Midland Metro** – The East Birmingham to Solihull (NEC / HS2 station) route is currently going through the consultation stage. Entering the borough along Cooks Lane, Fordbridge, it then travels along Chelmsley Lane passed Chelmsley Wood Town Centre, on through Birmingham Business Park and terminating at the NEC / HS2 station.
- **Car Parking Strategy** – Closely linked to the Solihull Town Centre Master Plan, significant changes may come forward to affect the parking capacity and management systems. The services' management and enforcement contract is also due to be retendered before October 2020, which is a significant opportunity and piece of work. The construction phase for any redevelopment of the town centre is expected to bring with it significant traffic management challenges.
- **CCTV system upgrade** – Closely linked to the RTCC project will be the need to make changes to the council's CCTV service. Greater coverage of activity along the Key Route Network is expected. Our current partnership with Transport for West Midlands Safer Travel Team continues to work well and is due to be reviewed again in 2020. The recent introduction of new security access system into Solihull High Street is another example of improved traffic management and one that could extend into managing activity in Mell Square in the future.
- **Solihull Urban Traffic Control Centre (UTC)** – At the heart of the council's Traffic Management systems is the UTC facility in Solihull Town Centre. From here the traffic signals, signal controlled pedestrian crossings, car park guidance and CCTV systems are managed and operated. Whilst this is currently a borough wide operation, greater emphasis will be required on the management of traffic around the UK Central / HS2 development site in the future.
- **Review of the Strategic Roads Network (SRN)** – Managed by Highways England on behalf of the Department for Transport, the SRN (formerly known as the Trunk Road network), is expected to change as a result of the works proposed by Highways England at M42 Junction 6 and by HS2 Limited along the A446 / A452 corridors to the east of their new station.

- **HS2 Railway** – In recent times, this will be the largest civil engineering construction project to be built in Solihull, which is due to be completed by 2026. With 14 bridges, 3 km of new highway, 17 km of new railway to be constructed and 1000's of additional HGV movements on the network it will bring with it significant traffic management challenges over the next 5 years.
- **Local Development Plan (LDF)** – Due to be adopted in 2019, the new LDF is expected to bring forward development opportunities that could see in the region of 17,000 new homes being built across Solihull. With this development, new access and estate roads will come forward, together with significant additional vehicle trips per day on the network. All will add pressure to the existing network and management services.

4.9 These projects and work programmes are expected to come with significant pressures and reasonably short time scales that the service will have to be in a position to respond to. The recent introduction of a Traffic Managers post for Solihull and the new Highway Works Permit Team has increased resilience for the service. To also help manage the expected pressure, the core team will endeavour to use the additional resources available to it through the Professional Services Contract, provided by the Atkins/Waterman partnership, which is currently working well

## 5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 Option 3, the development of a “Strategy on a Page”, in a similar format to that produced for the Council Plan (see Appendix C) is the preferred solution. It is affordable and can be produced within our existing staff resources; thereby ensuring available funding is used to support the outcomes required in the associated action plan.
- 5.2 Whilst the strategy is an important document that will set out clear priorities for the service, of equal importance will be the production of the associated Action Plan. Having the right data and system in place to inform an evidence based improvement programme will be key to successfully managing the impact of the work programmes detailed in paragraph 4.7.
- 5.3 In terms of timescale, it is suggested that following a short period of consultation with partners and stakeholders that the updated “Strategy on a Page” could be available for approval by Cabinet member at the June 2019 decision-making session.
- 5.4 For information, if options 1 or 2 were considered to be the preferred solution, a budget in the region of £30,000 and £20,000 respectively, would be required to collect the associated traffic data and fund the additional resource required to produce the documents.

## 6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

How will the options/proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of the key themes in the Council Plan?

- ☒ **Improve Health and Wellbeing** – Less congestion leads to improve Air Quality which in turn improves the health and well-being of our citizens.
- ☒ **Managed Growth** – Managing the additional traffic generated by the Council ambitious growth agenda will be a key priority for the service.
- ☒ **Build Stronger Communities** – At the heart of the local economy is having a reliable, safe and connected transport system that facilitates the movement of both people and goods around and through Solihull. Doing this well will help support and build stronger communities for Solihull.
- ☒ **Deliver Value** – Most of the Council's Traffic Management services are delivered with partners that have been procured through a competitive tendering / selection process. This approach ensure best value is delivered from the available financial resources.

## **6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:**

6.2.1 None as a result of the recommendations of this report.

## **6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:**

6.3.1 The subject has not been considered by the Council's Scrutiny process.

6.3.2 The development of the Council's Traffic Management Strategy will involve a consultation process with partners and key stakeholders.

## **6.4 Financial implications:**

6.4.1 The production of a Traffic Management Strategy as per option 3 can be delivered from the Council's existing Highway Services revenue staff budget and funded over the current and 2019/20 financial years.

## **6.5 Legal implications:**

6.5.1 The development of a Traffic Management Strategy is in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

## **6.6 Risk implications:**

6.6.1 No significant risks have been identified.

## **6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:**

6.7.1 None as a result of the recommendations of this report. The strategy will though be subject to Equality Impact Assessment during its production.

**7. List of appendices referred to**

7.1 Appendix A – Traffic Management Strategy 2013 -18

7.2 Appendix B – West Midlands Combined Authority – Congestion Management Plan

7.3 Appendix C – Solihull Council Plan on a Page

**8. Background papers used to compile this report**

8.1 Transport & Highways Cabinet Report – January 2013

**9. List of other relevant documents**

9.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004